

REMARKS

This paper is responsive to the Office Action dated June 19, 2007. Claims 1-3, 5-13 and 15 are currently pending in the subject application. Claims 1, 2, 9, 11 and 15 have been amended. Support for all amended claims can be found in the specification, and no new matter has been added by these amendments. Reconsideration of the claims in view of the amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejected claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-12 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,343,324 issued to *Hubis* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,796,934 issued to *Bhanot*. Without conceding the merits of the rejections, Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claims overcome this rejection.

Claim 1, as amended, recites in part "[the] connection information definition block includes a logical volume connection information specification division in which a connected state value concerning the connection of said computer is specified in relation to each logical volume included in said disk device or each logical area in each logical volume included in said disk device." Claim 1 also recites "an input/output execution control block that controls, based on the computer identification information, whether said operating computer is enabled to access a logical volume included in said disk device or a logical area in a logical volume." In one feature, "the input/output execution control block appends an access key having a value to an input/output request to or from said disk device." In another feature, "in the event that said access key value is equal to or smaller than said connected state value, input/output to or from said disk device is enabled." In yet another feature, "in the event that said access key value is greater than said connected state value, input/output to or from said disk device is disabled."

In contrast, *Hubis* discloses controlling access to a hardware device in a computer system having a plurality of computers and at least one hardware device connected to the plurality of computers. A locally unique identifier is associated with each of the plurality of computers. A data structure is defined in a memory. Based on the locally unique identifier, the

data structure identifies which computers may be granted access to the device. The data structure is queried to determine if a requesting computer should be granted access to the hardware device. (Column 3, line 62 - Column 4, line 8).

Bhanot discloses providing fault tolerance in a client/server system. If the server is disabled, a backup server assumes responsibility for any transactions that were interrupted when the server became disabled and processes any subsequent client transactions. (Column 2, lines 38-61).

None of the cited references, alone or in combination, teach all of the features recited in independent claim 1. For example, neither *Hubis* or *Bhanot* teach: 1) "the input/output execution control block appends an access key having a value to an input/output request to or from said disk device," 2) "in the event that said access key value is equal to or smaller than said connected state value, input/output to or from said disk device is enabled," or 3) "in the event that said access key value is greater than said connected state value, input/output to or from said disk device is disabled," as recited in claim 1. For at least these reasons, claim 1 is allowable over the cited art, as are claims 3, 6 and 7, which depend from claim 1.

Independent claims 2, 9, 11 and 15, as amended, recite features that are similar to the features recited in amended claim 1. As discussed above with reference to claim 1, the cited art does not teach these features. Thus, claims 2, 9, 11 and 15 are also allowable over the cited art for at least the same reasons. Claims 5, 10 and 12 depend from one of the independent claims discussed above and are allowable at least for the same reasons.

The Office Action rejected claims 8 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hubis* and *Bhanot* in view of "Load Distribution via Static Scheduling and Client Redirection for Replicated Web Servers" by *Tang*.

Claim 8 depends from claim 7 which is dependent on claim 1, and claim 13 depends from claim 11. The rejection of claims 8 and 13 is premised on the assertion that *Hubis* and *Bhanot* disclose the features recited in claims 1 and 11, and *Tang* discloses the remaining features of claims 8 and 13.

As discussed above, however, *Hubis* and *Bhanot* do not disclose or suggest all features recited in amended claims 1 and 11. As best understood, *Tang* does not provide any teaching or suggestion that would remedy this deficiency. Therefore, the rejection is based on a flawed premise and cannot be maintained. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 8 and 13.

Thus, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, 5-8, 9-13 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

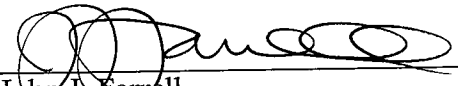
In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 206-467-9600.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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